

Contact: Lori Donlan  
517.373.9280

[www.michigan.gov/dleg](http://www.michigan.gov/dleg)

E-mail: [mediainfo@michigan.gov](mailto:mediainfo@michigan.gov)

Jennifer M. Granholm, Governor  
Robert W. Swanson, Director

## Benton Harbor Receives Cool Cities “Neighborhoods in Progress” Designation

**October 12, 2006** – Robert W. Swanson, director of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG), recently announced that Benton Harbor has been selected as a Cool Cities “Neighborhoods in Progress” designee.

Creation of the “Heart of the City Artist Studios at 80 West Main” includes completion of the rehabilitation of the Historic McClellan Building which will include three new and separate building facades, outdoor directional signs & murals, a “Welcome to the Downtown Benton Harbor Arts District” signage, streetscapes, seven artist studios, two fine art galleries, a welcome/library center for Students of the Arts, one additional retail shop, and an artist in resident apartment. The project will create approximately twelve new jobs and provide a springboard for downtown growth.

The Cool Cities Program is part of Governor Jennifer M. Granholm’s economic plan to help revitalize Michigan’s cities by retaining and attracting the jobs and people critical to the emerging economies of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The program is funded by redirecting existing resources in state government.

This year, sixteen projects have received the Cool Cities “Neighborhoods in Progress” designation and priority access to “tool box” items. Twelve of the 16 will also receive the catalyst grant of \$100,000. The 12 projects receiving the Cool Cities “Neighborhoods in Progress” and catalyst grant are located in Benton Harbor, Detroit (3), Flint, Grand Rapids, Howell, Ionia, Lansing, Mount Clemens, Muskegon, and Pontiac. The four projects that received the Cool Cities designation and priority access to state resources, without the \$100,000 catalyst funding are: Adrian, Cadillac, Dearborn and Saginaw.

“We had the funding available for 12 Neighborhoods in Progress, however we received 16 outstanding for proposals. As a result, we opted to add Adrian, Dearborn, Cadillac, and Saginaw projects as Cool Cities designees to assist their projects with the resources we have available including priority access and technical assistance,” said Department of Labor & Economic Growth Director Robert W. Swanson. “We’ve learned from past Cool Cities projects that just the designation alone gives them an opportunity to leverage significant investment into their communities.”



Department of Labor & Economic Growth director Robert W. Swanson (right) presents a sign designating Benton Harbor as a Cool Cities Neighborhood in Progress.



Pictured left to right: Sam Thomas, Richard Vance, Annette Vance, Trenton Bowens & Mayor Wilce L. Cooke.